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ITEM V "Potential of Air Attacks as a Weapon to Achieve  
ROLLING THUNDER Objectives"

Paragraph C. "Will of Regime as Target System"

Sub Item 4. "Agriculture"

1. The primary vulnerability of the DRV agricultural system to air attacks is the dependence on flood control and irrigation structures for the production of wetland rice, which is the principal food crop of the country. The water control structures enable North Vietnam to produce two rice crops a year above 19° north and sometimes three crops a year in the south.

2. The principal areas of wetland rice are the Red River Delta section below Hanoi, and farther south, the coastal plain in the vicinity of the Song Ma and Song Ca Rivers. The pre-dominant and also most vulnerable area is the Red River Delta section. This section comprises some 6,000 square miles covered by rice paddies. Practically the entire area would be flooded yearly if it were not for the extensive system of levees constructed to contain the rivers, streams and channels. Consequently, breaching the levee system to induce artificial flooding that would delay planting and/or flooding fields of mature rice ready for harvest would greatly reduce the crop.

3. The more southern wetland rice areas are not particularly vulnerable to annual flooding and do not require an extensive levee system. Efforts to interdict and destroy the irrigation systems would be prohibitive inasmuch as most damage could be repaired "overnight," thus requiring a daily attack to keep the system disrupted.

4. The attached study indicates the effort required to breach the levee system in the vulnerable Red River Delta region. The study was not conducted primarily to determine the effect on agricultural economy, however, it illustrates the feasibility of breaching levees by air attack. It also indicates the "by-product" of inundating military targets and LOCs in urban areas included in flood-vulnerable regions.

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5. The considerations that tend to make an air attack program against the agricultural economy marginal is the relatively short time such a program is feasible, i.e., approximately two months out of the year, and the adverse world opinion that would result from the destruction of food and probable loss of "innocent" lives normally connected with floods.

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